

HAGUE CONFERENCE—ESTIMATE OF
JEFFERSON 23

"Thank Heaven, I have never hesitated to criticize Jefferson; he was infinitely below Hamilton. I think the worship of Jefferson a discredit to my country; and I have as small use for the ordinary Jeffersonian as for the ordinary defender of the honour of Stuart—and I am delighted to notice that you share this last prejudice with me. I think Jefferson *on the whole* did harm in public life. How did I thoroughly believe in the people, just as Abraham Lincoln did, just as (Chatham and Pitt believed in England; and though this did not blind Lincoln to popular faults and failing** any more than it blinded the elder and the younger Pitts to English failings, it was in each case a prerequisite to doing the work well. In the second place, Jefferson believed in the West and in the expansion of our people westward, whereas the northeastern Federalists allowed themselves to get into a position of utter hostility to western expansion. Finally, Jefferson was a politician and Hamilton was not. Hamilton's admirers are apt to speak as if this was really to his credit, but such a position is all nonsense. A politician may be and often is a very base creature, and if he cares only for party success, if he panders to what is evil in the people, and still more if he cares only for his own success, his apolitical abilities merely render him a curse. But among free peoples, and especially among the free peoples who speak English, it is only in very exceptional circumstances that a statesman can be efficient! can be

of use to the country, unless he is also (not as
a substitute,
but in addition) a politician.

"This is a very rough-and-tumble, workaday
world, and
the persons, such as our 'anti-imperialist'¹
critics over here,
who sit in comfortable libraries and construct
theories, or
even the people who like to do splendid and
spectacular
feats in public office without undergoing all the
necessary
preliminary outside drudgery, are and
deserve to be at a
disadvantage compared to the man who takes
the trouble,
who takes the pains, to organize victory,
Lincoln, who, as
you finely put it, conscientiously carried out
the Hamiltonian tradition, was superior to Hamilton
just because he